

# CMS Connection

July 2019

## Director's Monthly Message: Janel L. Forde

The improvement initiatives that CMS is currently undertaking are aimed at providing its customers and employees a greater sense of freedom in their operations and daily work. I want to share with you the progress that is being made in our **Bureau of Personnel** on the hiring front. In the April issue of Connections, we detailed how Personnel is tackling the hiring process to eliminate unnecessary or time-consuming steps that do not add value for our agency customers.

**Health and Family Services** (HFS), along with the **Department of Human Services** (DHS) was eager to significantly shorten the hiring cycle to enable the ability to fill positions that are critical to the two agencies' complying with State and Federal regulations. Both are excited to partner with CMS to find a solution, although they were admittedly a bit skeptical that together we could achieve the aggressive goal of reducing the hiring cycle time from up to 300 days to just 45.

Phase One of the expedited hiring pilot focused on Sangamon and Cook County operations and filling 12 different merit compensation positions across 11 State agencies. The team fast-tracked a variety of roles, addressing positions from payroll managers to oral health-dentistry specialists for the **Department of Corrections**. I am happy to report that this Phase One test track filled positions within 40 days on average. Qualified Veteran-candidates were hired first, and all candidates who met the qualifications through testing were extended a job offer.

By first determining their professional qualifications, they eliminated time-consuming interview steps and delivered the agencies their much-needed skilled staff. Phase Two

captures lessons learned in the pilot phase, applying them to broader Statewide hiring efforts, as well as providing further training in online candidate systems. Continuous improvement is now Personnel's guiding principle. We can and should be proud of the team's efforts and accomplishments in just these first six months of the year.

We recognize however that hiring a qualified candidate for a given role is just the first step toward ensuring a new employee will be successful and productive. That is why **Mark Mahoney**, CMS's chief administrative officer, is leading the charge to introduce the new employee onboarding process. For an external new hire, navigating State government can be daunting. And, for internal candidates taking on a new role can mean new processes and business methods.

Mark is working closely with **John Baranzelli** and his team in the **Office of Operational Excellence**. Together, they are launching a *Rapid Results* initiative to identify what in CMS's current state of onboarding new employees can be improved and what new hires truly need to successfully begin in a new position. The effort seeks to provide new hires the tools, training and information necessary to be productive and capable as quickly as they can.

Lastly, I would like to thank Colleen Alderman and her team in the **Office of Labor Relations** for their tireless efforts to reach a contract agreement with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), which represents approximately 35,000 State employees. The union ratified the contract on Saturday, June 22nd.



### To the Vehicle Services Team:

*"I just wanted to send a quick email to compliment Josh and Jason at the CMS Garage-Joliet. I have worked for the Illinois State Police for 20 years, and can honestly say they are the most professional and courteous team. It was a pleasure to schedule a K9 unit install for my squad car; Jason went above and beyond to finish the job early and then fixed some additional equipment on my squad - rear lights and radio wiring - that I had not even asked him about. Please Thank them for a Great Job!"*

**Trooper Brian Kelliher #5455, ISP-PSU, Explosive Detection K9 Unit**

# Annual Administrative Hearings Conference

CMS' **Bureau of Administrative Hearings** provides centralized coordination and support for administrative hearings functions for the State's 25-plus agencies, boards and commissions that, collectively, conduct more than 150,000 administrative proceedings each year. Fostering opportunities for professional development is one such way the Bureau provides support. On June 21st, the Bureau hosted its annual day-long conference for the third straight year, providing continuing legal education hours (CLEs) targeted at the work of the various administrative hearings units in State agencies.



*CMS Director Janel Forde (left) and Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton (at right) enjoy a laugh together during the conference's Q & A session.*

The Bureau of Administrative Hearings was created in 2016 through Executive Order. Through its work, the Bureau aims to reduce barriers to access, increase clarity of communications, and ensure procedural fairness, making it easier for Illinoisans to interact with government. Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) seek to provide an impartial forum where Illinoisans can receive fair and prompt resolution of their disputes. According to **Katy Straub**, Deputy Director for the Bureau, "As part of our (the Bureau's) early work, we surveyed the State's ALJs about their professional development needs. We learned that nearly half of respondents reported receiving no ongoing training specific to their role as an adjudicator, and no formal judicial training before beginning to hear cases."

The Bureau sought to fill that void by providing meaningful training opportunities at no cost to participants and the State agencies that employ them. Straub explained, "Three years ago, the Bureau took up the mantle of hosting the annual Illinois Administrative Law Conference, an event previously organized by various working groups, many of which now participate in the Bureau's professional development subcommittee. We were thrilled that our first conference in 2017 was attended by more than 140 attorneys, and it has grown each year since." This year's event was attended by more than 200 attendees and representatives from over 30 State agencies.

This year's conference featured a special guest as keynote speaker. "We were excited that **Lt. Governor (Juliana) Stratton** agreed to address our conference," Straub explained. The Lieutenant Governor turned her keynote address into a lively, back-and-forth question-and answer session, facilitated by CMS' Director Janel Forde. Lt. Gov. Stratton is passionate about access to justice, as evidenced by her leadership role in the *Justice, Equity and Opportunity Initiative* of the Pritzker Administration.

**"We must all recognize the power of creating space for people to be heard."**

*- Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton*

Seven speakers in total presented to the group; four from the Chicago venue, and three from the live-streamed Springfield-Stratton Building location. "The content will be available at a later date online for those who were unable to attend but are interested in the topics and would like to receive CLE credit," Straub said. Empowering practitioners with the latest knowledge and best practices is one way to ensure fair and effective administration of justice in our State, and the growth of such professional development curriculum is proof of how far CMS's youngest Bureau has progressed since its inception in just 2016.

## Safety Corner

Welcome to the Safety Corner. This month, we talked to Dave Allen about the new CMS Health & Safety Committee. Dave shared his vision for the committee and why CMS can be a leader in health and safety initiatives across the State.

### **Understanding that it is still being established, what is the CMS Health & Safety Committee?**

Dave: The Health & Safety Committee will be a small working group of volunteer CMS employees who share a common passion and commitment toward educating our employees on a variety of topics directly related to protecting the health, welfare and overall safety of themselves and their co-workers.

### **What is your experience with projects like these and what did you learn from them?**

A: My experience comes from being the Captain in charge at the Illinois Secretary of State Police during the creation and development of the Capitol Police in 2005, which was the agency tasked with a similar safety agenda for the occupants of the capitol complex.

### **What are the goals for this committee?**

A: The primary goal is to bring together a working group that can tap into their own unique and individual talents – either workplace-utilized or otherwise learned -- and share the goal to create a committee that becomes self-perpetuating and energized with new ideas, staying up-to-date with changes and advancements

### **Who are you looking to join this committee with you?**

A: The committee needs to be diverse and reflect both segments of management as well as staff, both office and field-situated personnel, and must consist of persons who are selfless and looking to be part of a dedicated team.

### **What are the types of training you would like this committee to address?**

A: First and foremost is the need to push forward web-based awareness-level training regarding overall safety in-the-workplace during natural and man-made emergencies or incidents. Based upon what is learned during this roll-out period, more workplace-specific topics will be addressed for individual needs and presented by committee members in person.



### **What are the specific topics the committee will focus on, and what are the priorities?**

A: The specific topics center around natural hazards such as weather, tornadoes for example, earthquakes – yes, earthquakes since Central Illinois sits atop its own geologic fault lines, power outages, medical emergencies and so on. Man-made issues include active shooter drills, workplace violence, bomb threats, harassing telephone calls, and the like. The priority is to get this broad-based ‘awareness level’ training assembled as an umbrella program; it has yet to be fully established as mandated training.

### **How do you see CMS being a leader for health & safety initiatives?**

A: CMS can be the leader by creating a unique, talented and diverse committee that shares a common interest in keeping their colleagues and all State employee safe and healthy, as well as a passion for problem solving.

### **Why is this committee important to CMS?**

A: This committee is going to be an important and much-needed asset for CMS. Our workforce consists of employees serving in a multitude of jobs. Educating our employees on this broad-based subject will help educate and protect them. They are our most valuable asset and it shows the Director's as well as management's commitment to provide the tools and training with pertinent, up-to-date safety information.

**If you are interested in joining the Health & Safety Committee, please contact Dave at: [Dave.Allen@illinois.gov](mailto:Dave.Allen@illinois.gov).**



## Exemplary Employee of the Month: Rewa Boldrey, Surplus Property Control

“Rewa has single-handedly taken both our Law Enforcement Support Office (LESO) and Government Services Administration (GSA) programs to the next level in terms of operations and promotion,” **Brent Boesdorfer**, manager for Surplus Property Control explained in the nominating form for **Rewa Boldrey** CMS’s Employee of the Month for July. By developing efficient new customer-focused improvements, Rewa was able to streamline many of the agency’s customer requirements that had caused backlogs and delays in the past. She also produced and implemented marketing campaigns to both to promote and grow these two State programs.

**Peter Newman**, deputy director for **Agency Services** which oversees the surplus program, said, “Rewa implemented a tracking system, marketing, and training solutions for the LESO Program, which included creating an all-new ‘Enrollment Packet’, complete with training materials, training analytics, and so on. These resources have been a tremendous asset, allowing participants to learn about the program through Web-based training and video segments they could view on their own. All of it has been really well-received by our participating Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs.)

By introducing a new customer relationship management (CRM) platform – *HubSpot* - Rewa transformed the way in which Surplus Property interacts, tracks, and manages customer contact data along with sales. It also improved the program’s ability to ensure that deadline requirements are met. “I came to the State from the private sector doing marketing and advertising, and I know how powerful tools like *Hubspot* can be in tracking interactions with customers, doing e-mail marketing campaigns and so on,” explained Rewa. After working for years on the advertising side at the Chicago Tribune, Rewa moved to Springfield – where her sister had already put down roots – and began working for the Illinois Press Association. “Then, after 11 years,” Rewa said, “I was ready to start something new.”



*Rewa Boldrey (center) is presented with the July Employee of the Month recognition by CMS Director Forde (at right) Brent Boesdorfer, nominating division manager is at her side.*

She eventually found her way into her current role with Agency Services. Says Rewa smiling, “I still get calls from media industry head hunters, but I always say, ‘Nah, I work for the State of Illinois now, and I’m perfectly happy.’” She explains why she loves her job. “It’s just really rewarding to be able to get law enforcement agencies the equipment they need, and there’s nothing ambiguous about securing a 125-kilowatt generator for a flood-stricken area of the State or getting a surplus air boat to the Crawford County Sheriff’s Police so they can reach stranded people. It makes me proud, and I’m working to ensure more (law enforcement) agencies know what we can do for them.”



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